

1.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

1.2.1 General Goals, Objectives and Policies

As related in Chapter 5 of this Plan, Montgomery County has adopted a general goal of solid waste management that establishes waste reduction as the most preferred management technique, followed by reuse and recycling, then incineration with energy recovery, and, least preferred, landfilling. The general solid waste goals listed in Chapter 5 include the following specific elements:

- The County must undertake all waste reduction measures to the extent practical and feasible.
- All waste recycling measures should be implemented that are practical with available technologies and markets and which are not significantly more expensive than the waste disposal measures that would otherwise be needed. Technology, markets, and cost effectiveness should be reviewed regularly so that recycling may be expanded as new opportunities arise or, conceivably, contracted if markets for particular materials disappear for a long time.
- The County will operate, or cause to be operated, a waste-to-energy Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) to burn the combustible solid waste remaining after reduction and recycling.
- Out-of-County landfilling is the preferred disposal method for RRF ash, bypass waste, and non-processible waste that cannot be recycled or reused. “Bypass” means sending processible waste to out-of-County facilities for disposal when the amount of waste received exceeds the capacity of the County disposal system or projections predict that future waste receipts will cumulatively exceed the physical or permitted capacity of County facilities. In-county landfilling should occur

only if cost effective out-of-County landfilling options become unavailable or legislatively prohibited.

- The County solid waste acceptance, drop-off, recycling and disposal facilities are designed based upon projections of solid waste generated in the County. To conserve capacity at the RRF and at other solid waste and disposal facilities for the residents and businesses of the County, the use of these facilities is restricted to solid waste generated in the County. This restriction does not apply to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), where under the terms of a contract with Office Paper Systems (OPS), the County may allow other jurisdictions to use any excess capacity at the OPS facility (see Section 5.1.2.1 of this Plan).

- The County builds and maintains solid waste acceptance and disposal facilities primarily to accommodate municipal solid waste generated in the County. The County facilities may not necessarily accommodate other types of waste.

1.2.2 Integrated Solid Waste Management System

The County has adopted an integrated solid waste management system to achieve its goal of reducing and recycling solid waste to the maximum feasible extent. To achieve this goal, the County has adopted a policy that establishes a hierarchy of solid waste management options. The most preferred management option is the reduction of solid waste at its source. The second most preferred solid waste management technique is recycling and reuse of solid waste. The County's goal is to achieve, maintain or exceed 50 percent recycling of municipal solid waste by the end of Calendar Year 2010. The third tier option is combustion of solid waste remaining after reduction and recycling that for the recovery of electrical energy. The least preferred method of managing solid waste is landfilling. Solid waste remaining after reduction, recycling and combustion is landfilled. This hierarchy recognizes the interdependence of all elements of an integrated solid waste management system.

The County has a policy of pursuing pilot programs to determine the most feasible way of reducing solid waste generation both from an operations and a cost perspective.

To realize its recycling goals, the County has implemented a policy of County-wide (non-municipal) curbside collection of recyclable materials and established a policy favoring purchase of recycled materials. The County has adopted regulations requiring recycling at non-municipal multi-family residential (apartment) and commercial properties and has numerous programs to promote and further achieve its recycling goals, as detailed in Chapter 5. The County has also adopted a ban on yard trim at the County's solid waste disposal facilities. Moreover, the County sized the RRF and negotiated the ability to limit the annual RRF operating level to create system pressure to encourage waste reduction and recycling.

The MRA of 1988 sets a recycling goal of 20 percent for Counties with populations over 150,000 residents. The County's solid waste management programs and policies have created a system that exceeds the State's established recycling goals (see Section 3.1.10). The County's solid waste management hierarchy is fully consistent with the State's solid waste management hierarchy. By shifting the focus of solid waste management to reduction and recycling, the County strives to reduce the solid waste remaining for disposal. This helps the County reduce its reliance upon land within the County for landfilling. Further, by combusting solid waste, the volume of material required to be landfilled is significantly reduced. This is consistent with the County's comprehensive land use plan. The County's General Plan, known as "*A General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*," provides the comprehensive planning and policy framework for land use, growth management, and resource management in

Montgomery County.¹ This Plan acknowledges the existence of certain solid waste facilities and advises that the County “provide an adequate, self-sufficient, well-monitored, and ecologically sound system for the management of Montgomery County’s solid wastes”.²

1.3 GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The County is a charter county of Maryland with a nine-member county council and a county executive. The County Executive drafts the Plan, its amendments and revisions, and recommends solid waste legislation. The County Executive also administers the County solid waste laws in Chapter 48 of the Montgomery County Code. The County Council, after providing notice and conducting public hearings, adopts the Plan, its amendments and revisions and approves other solid waste legislation. An organizational chart of the County government is provided in Figure 1.1.

¹ See Section 2.3 of this Plan for a fuller discussion of the County’s General Plan.

² Source: "A General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives of Montgomery County," Maryland National Capital Park And Planning Commission, December 1993.